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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: FADHILA PARTICIPATES IN SHI'A COALITION "IN NAME ONLY"

Classified By: Political Counselor Margaret Scobey for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Hassan al-Shammari, leading Fadhila member in the Council of Representatives (CoR), told PolCouns November 2 that Fadhila's participation in the Shi'a coalition was "in appearance only." Al-Shammari characterized SCIRI as the major force in the Shi'a coalition because it receives external (i.e., Iranian) support and has a clear agenda. While disagreeing with SCIRI and its allies on a variety of issues, ranging from the regions formation law to Ayatollah Sistani's authority within the coalition, Fadhila could not afford to completely withdraw from the coalition because it would be open to populist political attacks. Already, al-Shammari related, some elements of the Shi'a coalition were attacking Fadhila as the "Baathists" of the coalition. Fadhila and the Sadrists agreed on certain issues, al-Shammari continued, but there was rarely strong coordination between thanks in part to the continuing rivalry between Muqtada al-Sadr and Ayatollah Mohammed al-Yacoubi for leadership of Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr's movement. Al-Shammari described Muqtada as "having only a name" and lacking true political understanding.

12. (C) Al-Shammari described two legislative proposals he was working on. The first, which he was currently drafting, calls for the creation of an independent commission to oversee the work of government inspectors general. The Council of Ministers (CoM) would propose an independent commission head for ratification by the CoR. The purpose of this proposal would be to make the ministry inspectors general, who would belong to the commission, more independent and less beholden to party influence. The second proposal he plans to develop is an elections law by which voters would vote for an individual, rather than a party list, to represent their individual district. The current electoral system, al-Shammari argued, benefited party leaders but led to weak representatives and no accountability to specific geographic constituencies. Al-Shammari said he hoped for support from groups within Tawafuq and Iraqiyya and expected opposition from within the Shi'a coalition. He asked for help from the U.S. Embassy in convincing the Kurds to back this proposal, noting that a Kurdish-SCIRI alliance was difficult to overcome. (Note: Shammari's complaints about the electoral system mirror those contained in a September 21 open letter from Ayatollah al-Yacoubi to the CoR. End note.)

13. (C) Comment: Al-Shammari, a lawyer by background and a member of the CoR Legal Committee, said that he was drafting these proposals himself and would absorb the costs of printing and distributing them as well. He contrasted Fadhila's capacity to that of SCIRI several times over the course of the conversation, arguing that SCIRI's external support allowed it to develop much greater legislative capabilities. At the national level at least, this contrast

seems like a valid one. End comment.  
KHALILZAD